DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 058 087 SE 013 190

TITLE	Situation Report--Colombia.
INSTITUTION	International Planned Parenthood Federation, London (England).
PUB DATE	Dec 71
NOTE	8p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Contraception; Demography; *Family Planning; *Foreign Countries; *Population Trends; Programs; Resource Materials; Social Welfare; *Statistical Data
IDENTIFIERS	Colombia

ABSTRACT

Data relating to population and family planning in Colombia are presented in this situation report. Information is provided, where appropriate and available, under two topics, general background and family planning situation. General background covers ethnic groups, language, religion, economy, communication/education, medical/social welfare, and statistics on population, birth and death rates. Family planning situation considers family planning associations and personnel, government attitudes, legislation, family planning services, education/information, training opportunities for individuals, families and medical personnel, program plans, government plans, and related supporting organizations. Bibliographic sources are given. (BL)

Situation Report

Distribution *

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Country COLOMBIA Date DECEMBER 1971

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STATISTICS	1950	1960	LATEST AVAILABLE FIGURES
Area			1,138,914 sq.kms.
Total Population	11,548,172 (1951C) [1]	17,484,508 (1964C) [1]	22,160,000(1970) [2]
Population Growth Rate		2.2% (1958-61) [1]	3.4% (1970) [3]
Birth Rate	36.9 (1950-54) [1]	41-44 (1960-65) [1]	45 per 1,000(1970) [3]
Death Rate	15-17 (1950-54) [1]	13.0 [1]	11 per 1,000(1970) [3]
Infant Mortality Rate	113.3(1950-54) [1]	99.8 [1]	78.3 per 1,000(1967) [1]
Women in Fertile Age Group (15-49)			4,916,000(1970) [2]
Population under 15			47% (1970) [2]
Urban Population		47.8% [4]	59.6% (1970) [4]
GNP per capita			app.US$300 (1970) [5]
GNP per capita growth rate			1.4%(1961-68) [6]
Population per doctor			2,220(1967) [7]
Population per hospital bed			420(1967) [7]

C-Census

1) United Nations Demographic Yearbook
2) Boletín Demográfico, CELADE. Santiago de Chile
3) Datos Básicos de Población en América Latina 1970: Department of Social Affairs of the OAS.
4) United Nations Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, November 1971
5) Estimate by the Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana
6) World Bank Atlas, 1971. IBRD.
7) United Nations Statistical Yearbook

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* This report is not an official publication but has been prepared for informational and consultative purposes.

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I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Colombia has one of the highest population growth rates in Latin America. At the present rate of 3.4% per annum the population will double itself in 21 years. It is likely that the vital registration system is inadequate, in particular as at least 40% of all births do not take place in hospital and as a result of deficient communications.

Since the mid 1950s, the economy has been growing at the rate of at least 5% per annum in real terms. However, serious social and economic problems persist, in the fields of housing, education, health, and welfare. Unemployment is a particularly widespread problem. The International Labour Organization - ILO - estimates that five million Colombians are unemployed at the present time and that if current trends continue, there will probably be four million people, or one third of the economically active population, unemployed by 1985.

The trend towards urbanization over the past few decades has compounded the many social problems which the country faces. There has been considerable migration to the cities stimulated by the failure of the rural economy to provide employment opportunities for the growing rural population. For example, the population of the capital city, Bogotá, has grown from just over one million in 1960 to over 2 million in 1969.

In the period 1967-1970 the country achieved a GDP growth rate of 6% per annum. It is hoped that the higher level of public investment proposed within the government's four year Economic and Social Development Plan, 1970-1973, will maintain and increase this rate. The Plan includes programmes to promote agrarian reform, health, education, and housing. In January 1970, a national employment expansion programme was launched with the cooperation of the ILO.

Ethnic

More than 50% of the population are of mixed Spanish and Indian descent, 20% are of European origin, 14% mulatto, 4% Negro, and there are very small groups of Indians or of mixed Indian and Negro descent.

Language

Spanish

Religion

The majority of the population are Roman Catholic: Roman Catholicism is the state religion.

Economy

Colombia is dependent on the production of coffee and is one of the world's largest producers. It accounts for over 70% of total exports. At least half the labour force are employed in agriculture, the chief products being, besides coffee, sugar, potatoes, rice, and cotton, all of which are exported.

Increasing efforts are being made to diversify the economy. A major livestock development programme is underway with the assistant of

an IBRD loan. Integration projects are being developed with other countries of the Andean Group and there is a limited amount of industrial growth together with the promotion of minor, non-agricultural exports. Mineral resources being exploited include emeralds, gold and oil.

Communications/Education

The chief form of internal communications is the road system which is currently being expanded and which includes approximately 30,000 miles of surfaced roads. There are internal and international air services. Internal river transport is also of some importance.

In 1967 there were 25 daily newspapers and 16 other newspapers and journals. There are over 200 private and government radio stations: (225 in 1966), and over 2 million radio sets. There are some 15 government or publicly controlled television stations and approximately half a million television sets.

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 7 and 14 years. However, provision of facilities and staff is inadequate and few children continue beyond the elementary level; in 1966 there were 2.4 million elementary pupils and only 320,287 pupils in general secondary schools. There are 16 private and 19 public universities.

Medical/Social Welfare

Public health services are directed by the Ministry of Public Health, and include prenatal and child health centres. Services are not able to meet the population's needs, especially among the poorer sectors and isolated rural communities. Private sector medicine is available for the middle and upper classes.

The Colombian Institute of Social Security (ICSS) organizes social security benefits and services.

II. FAMILY PLANNING SITUATION

Family planning services are provided by a private family planning association in both private and public health premises, by health centres of the Ministry of Public Health, and by the post-partum programme of the Colombian Association of Medical Schools (ASCOFAME). The latter also carries out evaluation work. There are some other private efforts in the field of family planning, in particular from religious and philanthropic institutions.

Attitudes

The government has for several years recognized the importance of family planning services as a public health measure. In December 1967 the President of Colombia was one of the first heads of state to sign the United Nations Declaration on Population, on Human Rights Day.

In 1970 the government established a National Population Council by decree to make recommendations on a national population policy. Despite this move, there is still opposition to family planning from some sectors, in particular among Catholic and conservative circles. The

opening of a vasectomy clinic by the private family planning association in Bogotá in 1970 was the occasion for extensive criticism of the association, both within the country and in other countries of Latin America.

Legislation

Under the Code of Medical Ethics, of 1954, physicians are prohibited from prescribing or committing any act, whatever the purpose, which is likely directly or deliberately to destroy human life, such as abortion, euthanasia, or contraception. However, when an abortion has been performed to safeguard the life of the woman, the normal penalty may be reduced.

Family Planning Association

History

The Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana - PROFAMILIA - (the Family Welfare Association of Colombia) was established in 1965 as a private effort to provide alternatives to the rhythm method as an effective method of family planning. In 1966 it opened a pilot clinic in Bogotá which offered contraceptive, cancer detection, and infertility services. The high demand for services led to the Association's rapid growth and clinical and educational programmes were extended in Bogotá and to other towns and cities. In 1968 PROFAMILIA became a member of the IPPF.

Address

Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana,
PROFAMILIA,
Calle 34, No.14-52,
Bogotá, D.E.,
Colombia.

Personnel

President: Dr. Fernando Tamayo
Executive Director: Dr. Gonzalo Echeverry
National Education Director: Dr. Laureano Marin Ardila.

Services

The services of PROFAMILIA have gorwn rapidly since 1965. Its clinics offer contraceptive and infertility advice and services, gynaecological care, and cancer detection services. Three new clinics were opened in 1970 bringing the total to 32.

As well as running private family planning clinics PROFAMILIA also provides services in some public and ICSS hospitals, maternal and child health centres, and general health centres. In 1970 the 32 clinics served 51,554 new acceptors and 163,530 follow-up visits. Approximately 82% of new and 91% of old acceptors used the IUD. The figures for 1970 revealed an increase of 24% in new cases and of 66% in follow-up cases over 1969. The non-clinical distribution of condoms is being carried out as part of PROFAMILIA's medical/clinical work and places condoms on the market at about one sixth of the usual retail price.

In 1970, in response to requests, PROFAMILIA set up a vasectomy clinic in Bogotá. Candidates must be at least 35 years of age with a minimum number of three children of different sexes. 92 operations were performed in 1970, and 189 in the first half of 1971.

PROFAMILIA takes part in joint service programmes, with the ICSS and and the Refugio de las Colinas Foundation, Bogotá. An agreement was signed with the ICSS in 1969 under which PROFAMILIA was to run family planning services for ICSS patients. The programme was initiated in the ICSS hospital, San Pedro Claver, in Bogotá in 1969 and in three further ICSS hospitals in Cali, Armenia, and Pereira in 1970. The four hospitals served 10,771 new acceptors in 1970. A second joint project, with the Medical and Nursing Faculties of the National University, is the Refugio de las Colinas Centre in Bogotá, founded in late 1969. It provides nutrition courses, a children's day-care nursery, a pediatrics programme and family planning services and education to the families of the shanty town in which it is situated.

The cancer detection service provided by PROFAMILIA has grown rapidly. In 1969, 63,105 tests were made and in 1970 92,888. To meet the demand the cytology service has been decentralized and four regional laboratories have been set up to share the work with the central laboratory in Bogotá.

In the first half of 1971 PROFAMILIA opened three new clinics and it is hoped to open a further seven by the end of the year. The 35 clinics served 28,095 new acceptors in the first half of the year and 90,594 follow-up visits.

Education/Information

The Department of Information and Education of PROFAMILIA runs an intensive clinic programme of talks, lectures, and film shows to motivate new acceptors and to follow-up women who are already within the programme. In 1970, over 200,000 persons attended talks, film shows or individual interviews. Equipment received from the IPPF and from SIDA enabled the Department to distributed projectors for films and slides among most centres which greatly facilitated the work of motivation and education. A field work programme is also being developed based on film shows and lectures for community groups, mothers' clubs, workers' associations and other interested groups.

In 1970 the Department reviewed the educational material it has produced and important modifications were made to slides, pamphlets, and the texts of talks for clinic clients. A large amount of educational leaflets, hand-outs, and other material is distributed through clinics and seminars.

Radio broadcasts were made during four months of the year in 1970. Over 62,000 15-second spots were broadcast and the campaign is being evaluated by Cornell University. A new and larger mass media campaign in 1971, supported by the free services donated by the publicity agency involved.

Training

Since 1968 PROFAMILIA has organized international training programmes for doctors. A small number of other professional personnel have also attended, e.g., sociologists. In 1970 the two 15-day courses were attended by a total of 39 participants, from Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador,

El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Venezuela.

Shorter courses are also held for a wide range of people, including priests, nuns, labour unionists, community leaders, members of the armed forces, and nurses aids. They are intended to inform the participants about demographic and family problems, the need for family planning, and the work of PROFAMILIA.

In 1970 PROFAMILIA staff members went abroad for advanced training with the help of financial assistance from the AID Mission. Five doctors studied in Chile, and other staff members attended courses and laboratories in the USA.

Research

The Association is carrying out clinical investigations of new contraceptives. A major sociological study has also been prepared, entitled 'Preliminary Study of 163 Families which have continued for more than three years in PROFAMILIA's Family Planning Programme'.

Resource Development

PROFAMILIA has established a Committee to organize fund-raising under a Director of Resource Development. By the end of September 1971, US$99,379.62 has been raised in cash and pledges.

Other Institutions

Government

Following the election of a new government in 1970, the formation of a National Population Council was decreeed, with representatives from five Ministries, from the National Department of Planning, the National Statistics Department, the Episcopacy of the Catholic Church,the Colombian Association of Medical Schools, and the demographic institutes. The Council is to review all relevant information on population matters, to promote studies or analyses as appropriate, and to advise the Government in the formation of a national population policy. The Council's recommendation was sent to Congress with the President's approval. In November 1970, the executive branch of the Government, by Executive Act, accepted a new National Plan for Social and Economic Development that includes a section on population policy.*

Family planning services are being provided in about 500 health centres of the Ministry of Public Health. According to an estimate by PROFAMILIA, this programme served about 50,000 acceptors in 1970. However, these family planning services are recent and not fully organised and established.

Asociación Colombiana de Facultades de Medicina-ASCOFAME: The Colombian Association of Medical Schools.

In 1964 ASCOFAME set up its Population Studies Division, to formulate and coordinate studies and programmes on population and family planning. It carries out family planning training for health personnel, in

* The Population Council Annual Report 1970. The Population Council, New York.

cooperation with PROFAMILIA, and runs a post-partum programme which in 1970 served about 10,000 acceptors.

ASCOFAME cooperates with the government. The Ministry of Public Health is one of its sponsors, along with the Ministry of Education, the Military Hospital, the National Institute of Nutrition, and the universities. Under a past agreement with the Ministry of Public Health ASCOFAME trained 1,200 doctors, and 800 other nurses and paramedical personnel from the Public Health Service, during the period 1967-1968. A liason committee has been set up to increase the coordination with the Ministry.

ASCOFAME also carries out research and evaluation activities in family planning and related fields.

Address

Asociación Colombianade Facultades de Medicina,
División de Estudios de Población,
Calle 45A, No. 9-77, 7o Piso,
Bogotá, D.E.,
Colombia.

Personnel

Chief of the Population Division: Dr. Guillermo López-Escobar.

Federación Panamericana de Asociaciones de Facultades de Medicina: Pan-american Federation of Associations of Medical Schools.

The aims of the Federation's former Population Division, now called the Programmes in Teaching of Demography and Teaching of Population, include the establishment and/or improvement of the teaching of demography and of comprehensive maternal and child health care in affiliated medical schools, and also to stimulate research projects in population dynamics, reproductive biology, and family planning, in their relation to health, within affiliates.

At the present time 89 of the 170 medical schools in Latin America teach demography and the principle has been accepted by representatives of all the schools. The Federation offers financial and technical assistance to those schools wishing to revise their curricula, and runs a comprehensive programme of training and information seminars and workshops, attitude surveys in the medical schools, the preparation of manuals and the development of curricula. It also runs a documentation centre, an audio-visual unit, and a publications department which produces a bulletin as well as working papers and conference proceedings.

Address:

Federación Panamaericana de Asociaciones de Facultades de Medicina,
Carrera 7, No.29-34, piso 6,
Bogotá, D.E.,
Colombia.

Personnel:

Chief of the Programmes in Teaching of Demography and Teaching of Population: Dr. Jorge Villareal.

Other Sources

- Annual Report for 1970 published by the Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana.

- Semi-annual Fiscal Report by the Asociación Pro-Bienestar de la Familia Colombiana for January 1 - June 30, 1971.

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